The Ascent of Man

By Jacob Bronowski

Quotes on Early Agriculture/The Fertile Crescent/Ancient Mesopotamia

**Jericho, Wheat, and Water**

“Unlike the forgotten villages elsewhere, [Jericho]…is monumental, older than the Bible, layer upon layer of history, a city…. The ancient sweet-water city of Jericho was an oasis on the edge of the desert whose spring has been running from prehistoric times right into the modern city today…. Here wheat and water came together and, in that sense, here man began civilization…because wheat and water, they make civilization: they make the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey. Wheat and water turned that barren hillside [the hill on which Jericho was built] into the oldest city of the world.” [The Ascent of Man, pages 68-69]

**In the accented of man, Jericho is one of the oldest city because it has a supply of food and water. It allow them to make bread allowing them to live.**

**Plants, Animals, Bricks**

When I was a young man, we all thought that mastery came from man’s domination of his physical environment. Now we have learned that real mastery comes from understanding and moulding the living environment. That is how man began in the Fertile Crescent when he put his hand on plant and animal and, in learning to live with them, changed the world to his needs….”

“By 6,000 B.C Jericho was a large agricultural settlement… [with] three thousand people, and covered eight or ten acres within the walls. The women ground the wheat with the heavy stone implements that characterise a settled community. The men shaped, patted, and moulded the clay for building-bricks, some of the earliest [bricks] known.”

[The Ascent of Man, pages 69-70]

**In the accent man the civilization began in the Fertile Crescent because people learned to domesticate plants and animal. In 8000 years ago Jericho was a walled city.**

**The Sickle**

“Settled agriculture creates a technology form which all physics, all science takes off. We can see it in the change from the early sickle [blade used to harvest wheat] to the late [sickle]. …. The sickle of ten thousand years ago of the gatherer [is different from] the sickle of the nine thousand years ago when wheat was cultivated…. The cultivated wheat is sawed with a serrated [tooth] edge: because if you hit the wheat, then the grains will fall to the ground; but if you saw it, the grains will be held in the ear of corn…. And sickles have been made like this ever since…. A technology like that, physical knowledge like that, comes to us out of every part of the agricultural life …. “ [The Ascent of Man, page 74]

In the accented man the sickle was use on the farm. The human change the sickle from a smooth blade to a serrated blade in order prevent losing wheat. Early framers held the stock of wheat and saw them so they didn’t lose any gain.

**The Plow**

“The most powerful invention in all of agriculture is, of course, the plow…. The plow… is a lever which lifts the soil, and it is among the first applications of the principle of the lever…. Long afterwards, [Greek scientist] Archimedes explained the theory of the lever to the Greeks, he said that with a fulcrum [pivot point] for the lever he could move the Earth. But thousands of years before that the plowmen of the Middle East [Fertile Crescent area] had been saying, ‘Give me a lever and I will feed the Earth.’ “ [The Ascent of Man, page 74]

In **toam** b says that “The most powerful invention in all of agriculture is, of course, the plow because it softens the soil and you can plant food

**The Wheel, the Cart, the Mill, and the Pulley**

“The wheel is found for the first time before 3,000 B.C. in what is now southern Russia. These early finds are solid wooden wheels attached to an older sledge for drawing [pulling] loads, which thereby is converted into a cart. From then on the wheel and axel becomes the double root from which invention grows. For example, it is turned into an instrument for grinding wheat.”

At about the time that Joshua stormed Jericho, say 1,400 B.C., the mechanical engineers of Sumer and Assyria turned the wheel into a pulley to draw water. At the same time, they designed large-scale irrigation systems.” [The Ascent of Man, pages 74 and 77]

According to b toam the wheel was invited in 3000 B.C. in south Russia they were first just solid wooden wheels use for drawing or pulling after that the wheel and axel were used in many invites including mills for grinding flour and well .